



# THE PICTURE OF EVEREST

*A book of full-colour reproductions of photographs  
of the Everest scene*

*Chosen and explained by*  
**ALFRED GREGORY**

*with an introduction by*  
**SIR JOHN HUNT**

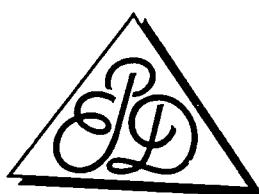
---

Reproduced with the authority of the Joint Himalayan Committee of the Royal Geographical Society and the Alpine Club from the original coloured pictures taken by members of the British Mount Everest Expedition 1953.

CAMP AT THYANGBOCHE (*frontispiece*)  
Photo : GREGORY. Retina II. f2 Xenon.  
Kodachrome. 1/50th second at f11.



THE  
PICTURE  
OF  
EVEREST



COPYRIGHT 1951 BY SIR JOHN HUNT  
PUBLISHED BY E. P. DUTTON & CO. INC. NEW YORK

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

# FOREWORD

by

BRIGADIER SIR JOHN HUNT

EVEN while we were preparing for our Expedition during the autumn of 1952, it was already obvious that there was great and widespread interest in the Everest adventure. It seemed to me that we, who were to have this wonderful experience of travelling through a beautiful and comparatively unknown land and penetrating into a rugged, ice-gripped waste towards the top of the world, had a certain responsibility to those others, not so fortunate but no less fascinated by our opportunity. The best way to help them share it with us—to give a vivid impression of our life on Everest and its grandiose background—was to bring back a fine collection of pictures. It was for this reason that we took great pains about our still photography as well as the making of a film. I invited Alfred Gregory, a keen and expert photographer himself, to accept the responsibility for this important job; choosing and procuring ample quantities of film, ensuring that we were adequately equipped with cameras, filters, and light meters and, during the Expedition, co-ordinating the coverage of all we saw and did. B. R. Goodfellow, another experienced photographer of mountain scenery and Honorary Secretary of the Joint Himalayan Committee which launched the Expedition, gave us some valuable advice as to how to get the best results, for few of us could claim to be skilled photographers.

It was largely due to the foresight of Gregory and the generosity

of the supplying firms that the quality of our pictures was so good. For the artistic merits of the pictures themselves, and, more important still, that the story of the Expedition was so fully recorded from Kathmandu to the summit of Everest, nearly every member of the party must share the credit. Taking pictures upwards of 25,000 feet, in fifty degrees of frost, often delicately balanced on difficult ground, with a murderous wind blowing, a heavy load on your back and an oxygen mask on your face, requires a good deal of resolve. A large number of the pictures taken at high altitude were the work of Gregory, and I have to thank him, both for his part in this and for the fine selection which he has made from the enormous number of colour films in our collection.

# INTRODUCTION

THE *Picture of Everest* is the portrait in colour of the fascinating country of Nepal and the highest mountain in the world. Many beautiful photographs were taken by members of the 1953 British Everest Expedition, and I have tried to select from the hundreds of colour pictures which we brought back, a number which will be a record, for all time, of our adventure. No book can hope to do justice to the lonely beauty of Everest and the peaks of Khumbu, but I hope that through these pictures the reader will be able to share in some part our life on Everest, and to go with us, in fancy at least, across the colourful and exquisitely lovely land of Nepal. Our way will be along the rough tracks of the trade routes, winding over the foothills, through the rhododendron forest; over high passes with wonderful vistas of the Himalayan snows stretching across the horizon, to the land of the Sherpas and the cold ruthless beauty of Everest.

Because something must always be left to the imagination the reader must reconstruct for himself, through these pictures, the real joys of the Himalayan life: the scent of juniper smoke from our camps in the foothills at twilight; the sudden breathtaking sight of prayer flags on the crest of a pass, leading the wanderer on to the inner sanctuary of the hills; or the thrill of a first glimpse of Everest, seen across the deep valleys of Khumbu, a wave of rock and snow glinting in the sunlight, with a cloud plume blowing from its top.

The approach to Everest is delightful, a holiday for anyone who likes a superb mountain land, but climbing on Everest is a grim and

determined battle with the forces of nature. Neither I nor the pictures themselves can tell much of the struggle in the rarefied air, or the unbelievable fatigue that can come to a climber toiling up the last slopes of the mountain, where he almost reaches the end of human endurance and lives at the physical limit of possible life, but these pictures will perhaps bring you nearer to our adventure, and say a little of why men climb

This collection of pictures will not explain, directly at any rate, why we got to the top, for the reasons are many and complex, and the story of how it all happened has already been wonderfully told by John Hunt. If our success can be attributed to any one reason, it is above all the amazing team spirit that existed at all times on the mountain, and the man responsible for this was John Hunt, who so brilliantly led the Expedition. To him must go the credit for making, of a group of very individual mountaineers, a team in the best sense of the word. We owe him a great debt of gratitude for a very successful climb.

ALFRED GREGORY

# THE PICTURE OF EVEREST

## THE START OF A JOURNEY

Leaving the valley of Kathmandu, we were now starting a walk of 175 miles to Everest. This was the beginning of a seventeen-day journey which was to take us to our first base camp at Thyangboche. For the transport of our eight tons of baggage we employed about 350 coolies local porters from the Kathmandu district, to carry all our stores to the mountain. These were men, typical of the country, who normally earn their living by carrying heavy loads along the trade routes of this wild land. Carrying in addition to a load of 60 pounds their own meagre needs for the journey (a blanket, a cooking pot and food), they covered about twelve miles each day. They walked barefoot, no great hardship perhaps in the valleys and lower foothills, but as we gained height they must, in their scanty clothing, have spent uncomfortable hours during the nights in the open. Because of the large number of coolies the party was split, the main portion of the expedition with about half the coolies going first the rest, with Wylie and Ward, following a day later. It was a delightful walk across Nepal, by rough tracks winding their way through the foothills of the Himalayas, with always in the distance and around the corner of the path tantalizing views of high snow peaks, a walk through a land of flowers and sunshine.



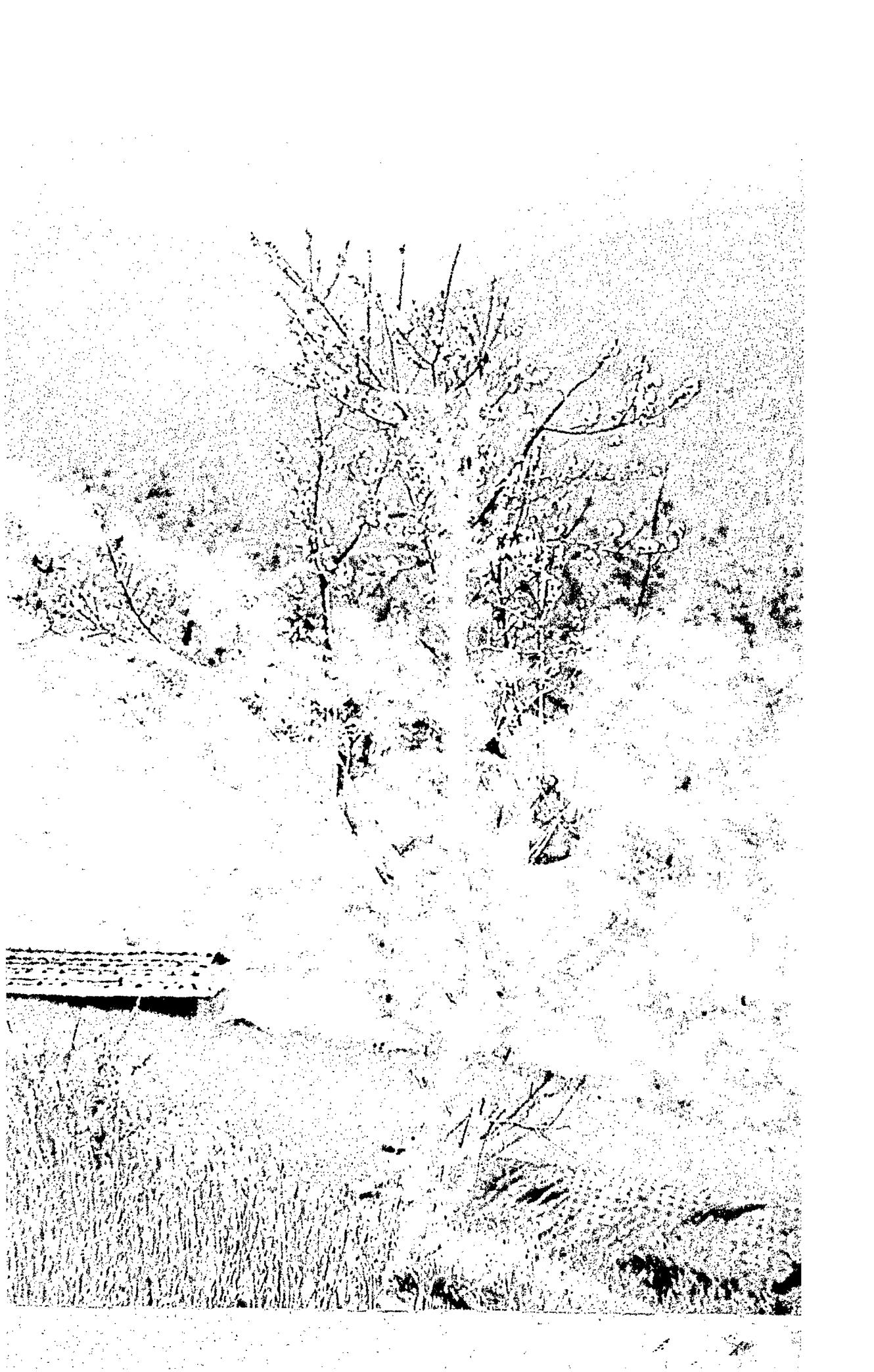
## A CAMP ON THE MARCH

This is our camp at Chaubas on a grassy plateau from which we had superb views across the foothills. George Lowe (in the check shirt) and Ed Hillary are helping to erect the big dome tent. This tent destined for use at Base Camp and in the Western Cwm, was used during the march and served as a general mess tent as well as for the climbers at night. In front of the tent Tom Stobart, our cine photographer, is sitting on his air mattress contemplating all this activity whilst scattered around on the ground are clothing air beds and sleeping bags belonging to members of the team. We reached this camp site in the early afternoon after a long, uphill climb from the hot valley below, where we had spent the previous night sleeping out by the river at Dolaghat. It was a delightful spot. Stretching away to the east we could see fold after fold of foothill country shimmering blue grey in the heat haze of the afternoon, whilst behind our camp rose a hill covered with rock and scrub. This was a challenge not to be refused and during the early evening most of the party walked to the top and were rewarded with at least a glimpse of what was just a suggestion of massive snow peaks, for the most part hidden by a bank of cloud, but with here and there a snow summit piercing through a sign of things to come.



## A VALLEY IN NEPAL

A daily start at 6 a m , after a hurried cup of tea in the dawn light, saw the party well on the way in the cool of the day A march of two or three hours, with our cook Thondup rushing ahead to choose a site for breakfast, made sure that we arrived at our first halt of the day with enormous appetites A leisurely departure after breakfast was followed by the inevitable toil up the hillside through the dense woods that cover these hills, breaking out on the crest of the ridge into open country and breath-taking views Camp was pitched in the early afternoon and the rest of the day spent according to the whims of the various members of the party For some it was a time spent bird watching and chasing many-coloured butterflies, for others there was photography or reading, or perhaps just sleeping in the sun This was the month of March which is perhaps the most delightful period for a walk to the high mountains At that time of the year the countryside is a riot of colour In the valleys flowers were growing all around us, whilst in the fields corn was ripening in the spring sun Amongst the golden corn grew trees covered with almond blossom and always this sea of colour was set against a background of deep Himalayan forest It is hard to imagine anywhere more beautiful than this country, inhabited by simple friendly people It was the land of our dreams, a path to Everest carpeted with flowers and with the scent of pine trees in the air



## A TRACK IN THE FOREST

We had now been walking for nearly a week, and the party was becoming bronzed and fit from the hard exercise of going up and down over the foothill ridges. The aspect of the countryside was changing the hot tropical valleys and cultivated uplands dotted with Nepalese houses were giving place to more rugged mountainous country. More frequently now across the forest-clad hills we had views of the high peaks. Over all the high hillsides rhododendrons were in blossom. The rhododendron is surely the flower of the Himalayas and when seen as a foreground setting to these unending hills with stately spires of snow peaks rising behind them across a valley filled with mist it makes an unforgettable impression, one which lingers in the memory long after the hardships and cold and desolation of a high camp are forgotten. In the photograph, which is typical of the wooded country that covers the higher slopes of the foothills, two of our Sherpas are turning a bend of the track in the forest carrying large rucksacks which contain their own belongings as well as those of their sahibs.

Photo HUNT Leica f3.5 Elmar Ilford colour 1/60th second at f8



## HIMALAYAN FLOWERS

Here are pictures of some of the flowers to be seen round every bend in the track on the journey to Everest. The valleys are carpeted with yellow and mauve primulas, orchids grow from the bark of trees above irises in the damp grass, and the air is scented with almond blossom. Across the foothills in springtime stretches a forest of rhododendron trees, and every new vista is coloured with the crimson-red blossom of these lovely flowers. In certain areas on the higher slopes of the foothills, the forest is covered with white flowers growing on tall magnolia trees and the hillside is ablaze with rhododendron starred with the pure whiteness of magnolia blossoms—a perfect setting for the snow peaks beyond.

Photo

Top Left HUNT Leica f3.5 Elmar Ilford colour 1/50th second at f8  
Top Right GREGORY Rolleiflex with No 2 Proxar Ektachrome  
1/50th second at f8  
Centre GREGORY Rolleiflex with No 2 Proxar Ektachrome 1/50th  
second at f8  
Bottom Left HILLARY Retina II f3.5 Tessar Kodachrome 1/50th  
second at f8  
Bottom Right GREGORY Rolleiflex with No 1 Proxar Ektachrome  
1/50th second at f6.3



## A MANI WALL

Standing on a rock and looking down into the valley below is George Lowe. Wearing shorts and gym shoes and carrying a rucksack he is dressed for the march, for it is hot in these valleys and light clothing and shoes are quite sufficient for the walk across the foothills. This was a particularly attractive spot at the crest of a ridge by a col which we crossed to descend into the valley beyond. On the rock are some very fine paintings of Buddhist prayers, work done by the Lamas of the district. It is not usual to find such good specimens in colour. More often they are simply chipped with a chisel on the boulders and rocks close to the path. All true Buddhists must walk on the left side of these Mani walls, as they are called, and there are tracks on each side of the prayer stones made by travellers coming up and down the path. From this pass we walked at first over grass and shrub and then through pleasant woodland by a clear stream in an open valley until we reached the village of Jumbesi. When we arrived at this village, nestling amidst the hills in rich pastoral country with snow peaks showing above the valley, it was as though we had come upon a corner of the Alps and one instinctively listened for the cowbells. It was one of the most lovely spots on the whole of our walk.



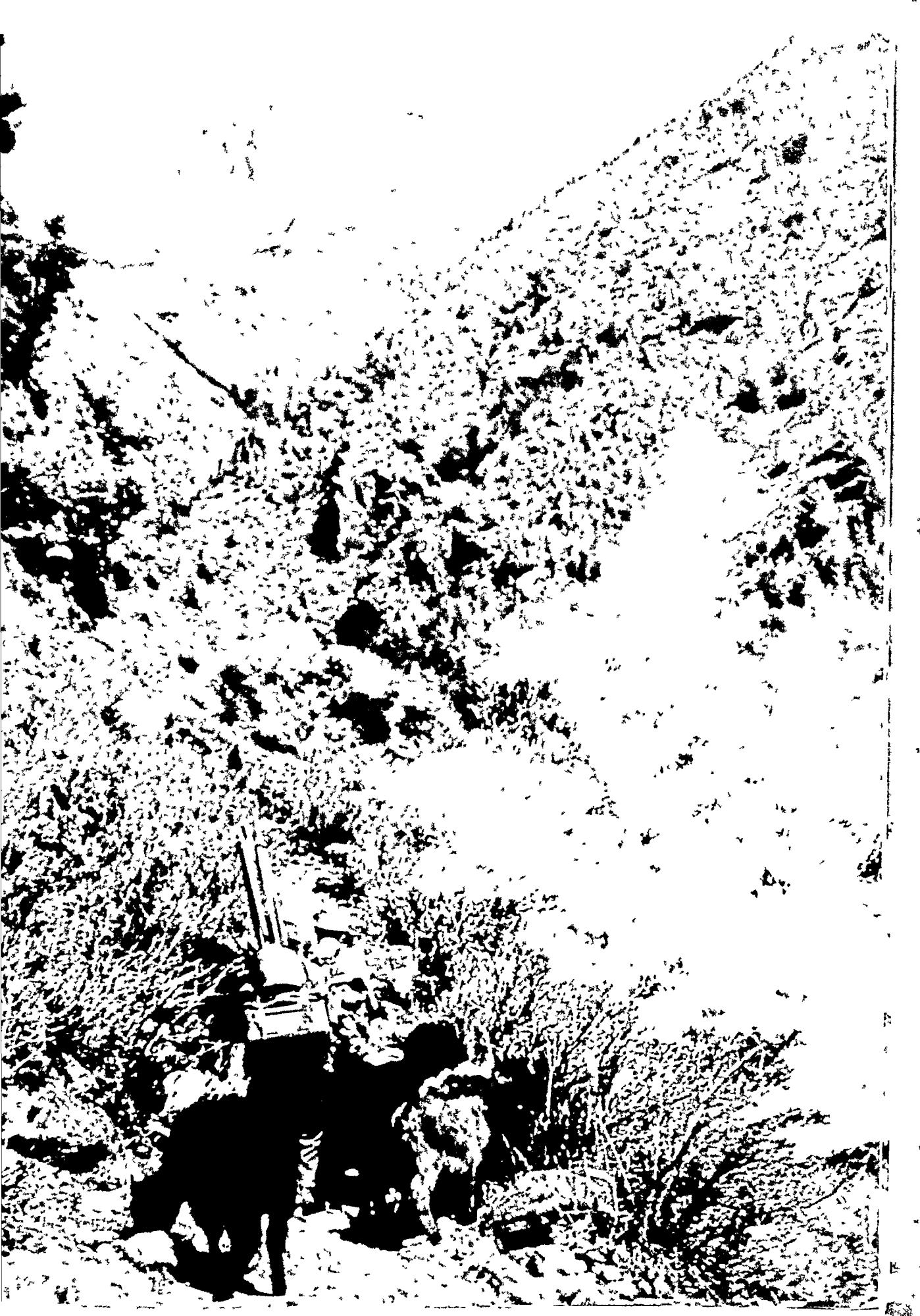
## IN THE VALLEY OF THE DUDH KOSI

In the valley of the Dudh Kosi (the Milk River), which flows down from the Everest group, some of our coolies, now nearing the end of their journey, are crossing one of the bridges erected by the Sherpas of this region. At first sight these bridges appear very unsafe, a few tree-trunks anchored by stones and balanced above the booming river below, but they are soundly constructed and stand quite a lot of use although during the monsoon many of them are swept away and have to be replaced each season. We were now in the district of Khumbu the homeland of the Sherpas, situated right in the shadow of Mount Everest. It is from these valleys that the men come who have worked as porters with all previous expeditions on Everest, and who have contributed so much on the mountain. Our way followed this deep Himalayan valley for some time, winding up the steep hillside away from the roar of the torrent past villages with their green patches of cultivation, and always now at every lift and col on the track there were piles of stones chipped with Buddhist prayers. Above them white prayer flags waved in the mountain breeze sending their "Oh Mane Padme Hum"—"Hail the Jewel in the Lotus" —towards the eternal snows.



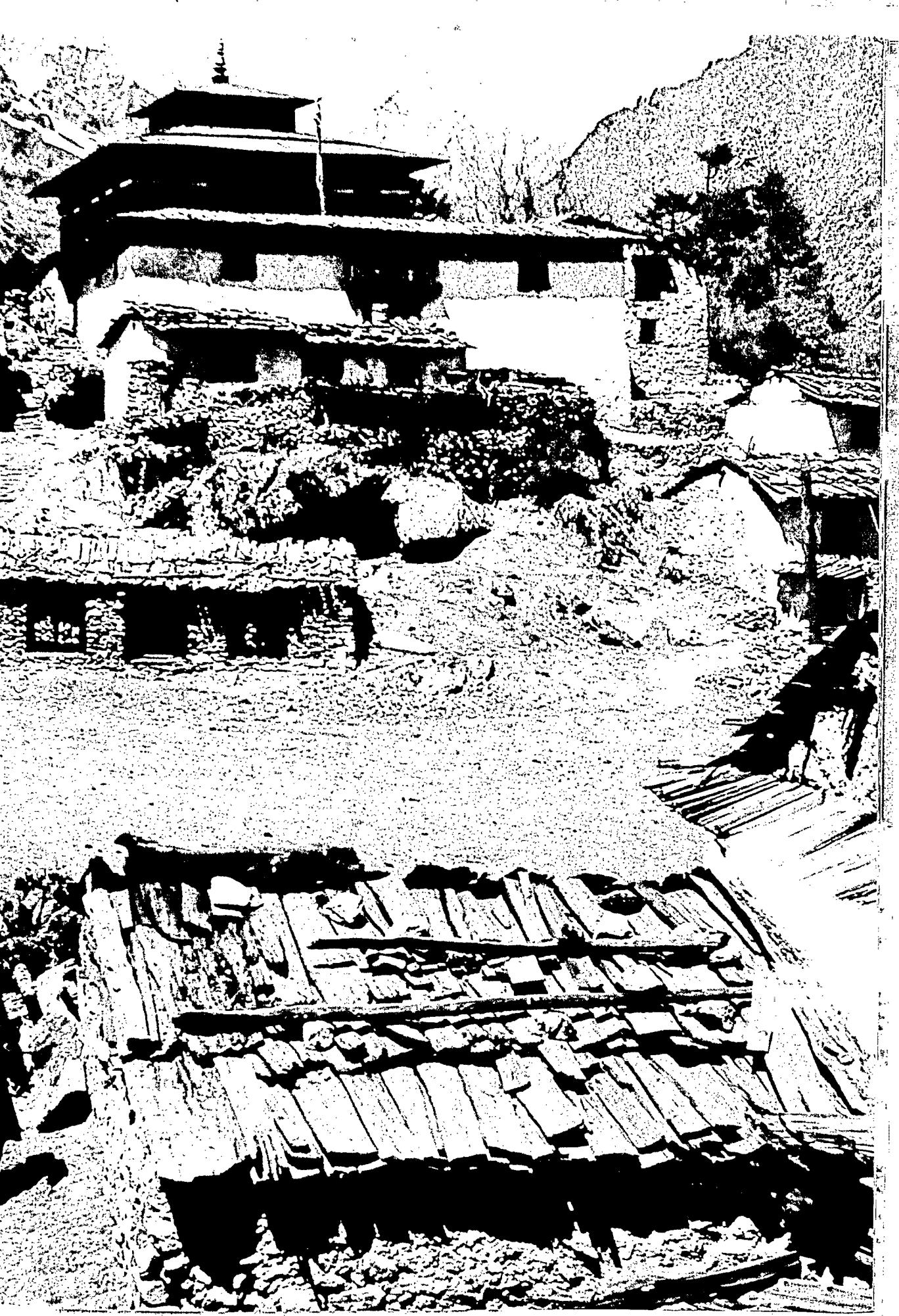
## THE PATH TO NAMCHE BAZAR

Following the valley of the Dudh Kosi, we eventually descended by a stony track through the pine woods and followed the river again as far as the junction with the Bhote Kosi, the river which flows from the Nangpa La. This is a pass to the North and one of the main trade routes with Tibet. On the track passing the sheep is Tom Stobart followed by his faithful Sherpa, Sherap, who is carrying his camera and tripod. On the green shoulder ahead starts the track which winds up through the woods to the village of Namche Bazar, situated at a height of about 12,000 feet. It is the most important village in the district of Khumbu. Beyond the ridge of moraine is the rocky peak of Khumbila, a mountain which is sacred for the Sherpas of this area. At the end of the day we camped on a hill above Namche Bazar, on a delightful grassy alp, with the village nestling in the hillside below. From here there is normally a magnificent view of Everest but on this occasion we were not to see it as it was hidden by a bank of cloud. It was a gay party that arrived that night, for our Sherpas were coming home. Already during the day they had been meeting many friends and relatives along the path and were now anxious to get away to meet their people. Most of them came from Namche Bazar and the nearby village of Khumjung.



## THYANGBOCHE

After a short day's march across the shoulder of the ridge above Namche Bazaar and by a hill track above the Dudh Kosi, far down in the gorge below, we reached the end of the first stage of our journey and arrived at the Buddhist monastery of Thyangboche. In the picture the main buildings of the monastery can be seen, with two mountains that are part of the massif of Kwengde behind. They use as a gong here an empty oxygen cylinder, left behind by a previous Everest expedition on the other side of the mountain and brought round from Rongbuk by the monks. On the grassland not far from the monastery in a situation beautiful beyond all description, we established our first and temporary base camp, where we were to spend about a month before going to Everest. The grassy alp is ringed with silver birches, azaleas, rhododendron bushes and fir trees, and beyond these in every direction tower ice peaks which for majesty of outline surely cannot be rivalled anywhere. They are wonderful mountains, fantastic of shape and incredibly difficult, that lift their rock buttresses and flatings of ice high into a sky of Himalayan blue. We could never tire of looking at them and watching the play of morning sunlight along their ribs of rock and snow cornices, seeing the long streamers of snow-plume blowing from the high crests in the gale up there with the sun shining through, giving a feeling of a cold unapproachable world above us. Often in the afternoon they gathered about themselves a mantle of foaming cloud, but with a corner of glacier or a turret of rock showing through here and there as it moved, giving an impression of even greater height, and making them look more impossible than ever.



## ISLAND PEAK AT SUNSET

Island Peak is a summit of about 20,000 feet in the valley of the Imja, which was climbed for the first time by a small party of members of the expedition and three Sherpas. It is a mountain affording a very fine ice climb by way of its south ridge, which can be seen as the right skyline in the picture. Here in the district of Thyangboche and the surrounding valleys we spent a month training and getting fit before going on to Everest. We had come to the area a month ahead of the normal time for this purpose, so that during April we could spend some time exploring the unknown country of this region and at the same time getting acclimatized to higher altitudes. It was a period which later paid great dividends in fitness on Everest. This was perhaps the most delightful period of the expedition a time when we could relax a little and when the heights we were at still allowed us to enjoy our climbing. At the same time we were settling down as a team, getting to know one another well, and working with our Sherpas.

Photo GREGORY Contax 35 mm f4, Sonnar Kodachrome 1/125th second  
at f4



## UNNAMED ICE PEAK

This superb ice peak is only one of the many fantastic and utterly lovely mountains that spring from the wild unknown valleys that surround Mount Everest. It is just an unnamed peak, one which is perhaps not important enough to have a name in this land where such towers of ice are commonplace. It is, however, typical of the country and the photograph gives a very good idea of the way the ice fluting, perhaps formed by the soft monsoon winds and the hot sun, clings to the steep faces of these mountains and makes them into the fairy castle type that they are. During the weeks of acclimatization spent in this area, the expedition split into small groups of three or four climbers with a number of Sherpas and made various journeys into the unknown country around Thyangboche. One party visited the Chola Khola, a valley which runs up north-west from above Thyangboche, for the first time and made the first ascent of a fine 20,000 foot peak called Kang Cho. Another group went into the valleys near Ama Dablam, climbed a nearby rock peak, and reached a col which they called the Mera La. During these journeys the expedition climbed at least six mountains of about 20,000 feet.

Photo GREGORY Contax 135mm f4 Sonnar Kodachrome 1/125th second  
at f4



## A CAMP IN THE IMJA KHOLA

Camping in a situation like this, in a sheltered hollow of a Himalayan upland by the side of a glacier, with peaks to climb and an unknown valley to explore, is the ultimate in Himalayan travel. We came to this spot during one of our acclimatization journeys, climbing the hillside above the pasturage of Chukhung to establish a camp at an altitude of about 17,000 feet in the Imja Basin, under the South Wall of Nuptse and Lhotse. The yellow tent is a pyramid tent of strong design which gave service as high as the South Col. Here it was used by our Sherpas, who loved to crowd together in one tent. The pink tent is one of our high altitude Meades. Standing between the two tents is Tenzing. Behind the moraine and to the south-east of our camp, rising from the Imja Glacier and standing supreme amongst its lofty neighbours, the icy tooth of Ama Dablam, cold, unearthly, and incredible of outline, shines against the Himalayan sky. It is the most dramatic of all the peaks of Khumbu.



## EVEREST FROM THYANGBOCHE

By the middle of April our period of training and acclimatization was coming to an end, for the time had come to turn our faces towards Everest and move up the Imja Khola with all our stores on a three days' march to our Base Camp on the Khumbu Glacier. Already a party was at work on the icefall, cutting a route through its tottering pinnacles to the Western Cwm. In the foreground of the picture, which was taken from the valley above Thyangboche, are the tents of our camp, the two big domes on the left and our Meade tents on the right. Between the tents members of the expedition are sitting around on boxes eating breakfast. Among the Sherpas standing nearby are some of our high altitude porters and also coolies, who are carrying up our stores. Beyond the trees of the valley, and away above the lower hills, the stupendous wall of Nuptse and Lhotse stands like a sentinel blocking the exit from the valley. Peeping over the long ridge of Nuptse, a ridge which never falls below 25,000 feet throughout its five mile length, looking quite small from this distance, but unmistakable in form, is the final pyramid of Everest. The summit can be seen clearly, for once without its usual plume of cloud. Just to the right is the South Summit, from which the South-East Ridge descends to the South Col, which is hidden behind the Nuptse ridge.



## A REST BY THE TRACK

Members of the Everest Team, here looking more like a band of brigands than British climbers en route for Everest, are resting by the track near the village of Pangboche. On the left is Wilfrid Noyce with Tom Stobart next to him, then a smiling Charles Wyke and Mike Westmacott with the rather extravagant headgear, and to the right black-bearded Mike Ward, our cheerful doctor John Hunt, obviously happy to see his team fit and in such good spirits, is behind Noyce, next to George Band in the panama hat. Last but by no means least either in importance or size is Tom Bourdillon. Missing from this group are the two New Zealanders, George Lowe and Ed Hillary, Griffith Pugh, our physiologist, Tenzing, James Morris of *The Times* and of course the photographer.



## APPROACHING BASE CAMP

The main party of coolies is arriving near our Base Camp on the Khumbu Glacier. These coolies are Sherpas from the Namche Bazar district who were employed to lift the balance of our baggage from Thyangboche. Here they are arriving in the great cirque of peaks that surrounds the Khumbu Glacier, passing close to mountains like Pumori and Lingtren, already well known from the north, which dominate the head of this glacier. The glacier is covered with a fresh fall of snow, making arduous going for laden porters. We were now in a period of unsettled weather, a condition which seems normal on this side of the mountain and continues until late in May. Every afternoon there were falls of snow which restricted our days and made for hard work on the mountain. To the right of the photograph is the Lho La, the uncrossed col between the Khumbu Glacier and Tibet on the other side. The slopes of the Lho La look deceptively easy, but all the time we were there they were swept continually by ice avalanches from the cliffs above. Beyond the Lho La is the North Peak of Everest, whilst Everest itself is away to the right out of the picture. Base Camp was established on the Khumbu Glacier at a height of about 17,900 feet, near the foot of the icefall.

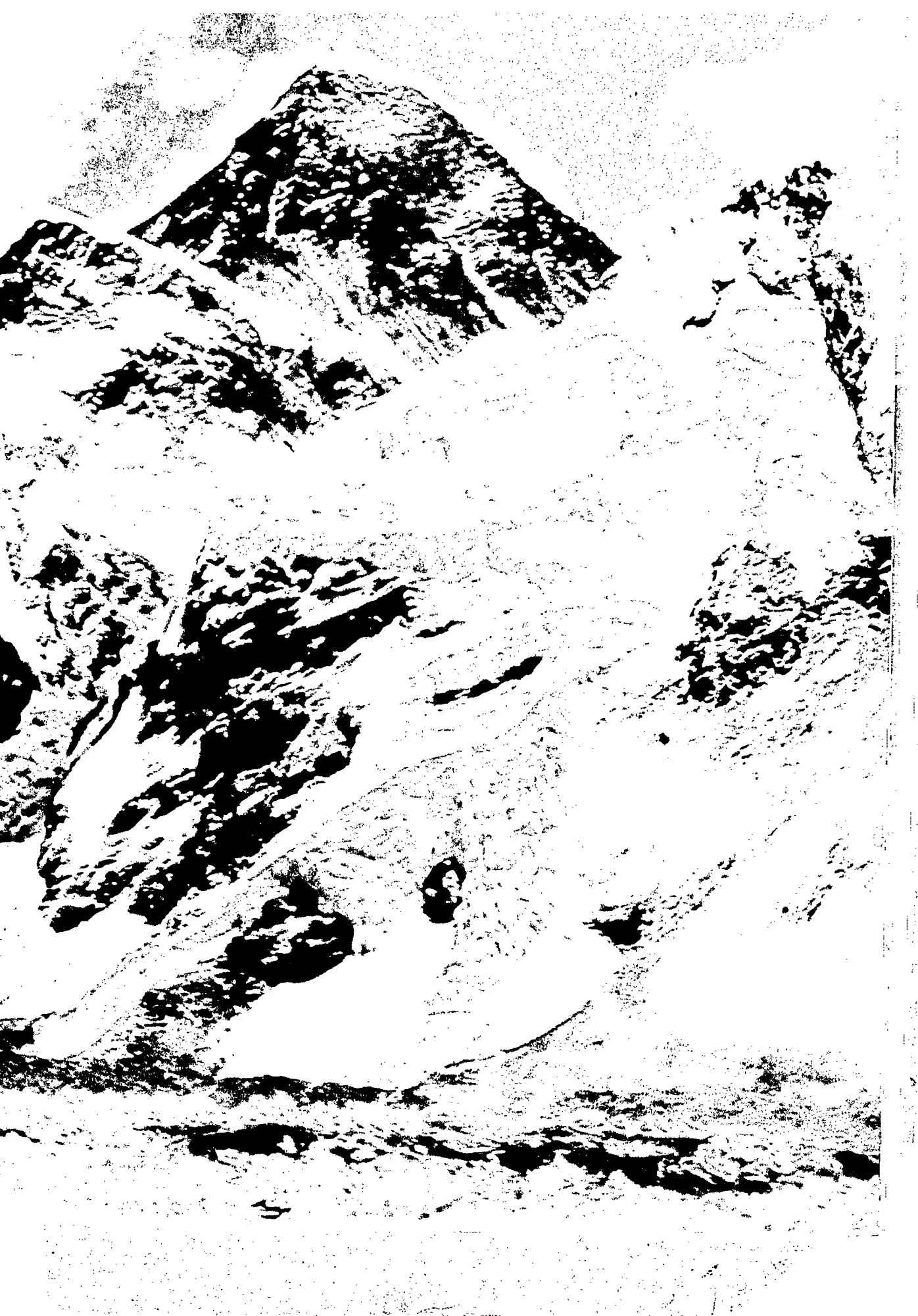
Photo GREGORY Retina II f2 Xenon Kodachrome 1/100th second at f6.3



## SUMMIT OF EVEREST

This photograph was taken from across the valley, on the slopes of Pumori above the Khumbu Glacier, and shows the final pyramid of Everest above the ridge of Nuptse. The left hand skyline silhouetted against the white cloud is the North Ridge. In view are the Yellow Band, the beetling crags of the Black Band, the Second Step, and the steep rocks above leading to the Summit, historic ground and the scene of those gigantic efforts of pre-war British Expeditions on the mountain. From the Summit descends the final ridge to the South Summit on the right. This was a portion of the mountain not yet seen and over which rested a great question mark, only time would tell if this last stretch was possible. In the upper left side of the photograph is a shoulder of the South West Ridge. In front of Everest, running up to the right and out of the picture, is the ridge of Nuptse, which hides the upper part of the icefall and the Western Cwm. The lower portion of the icefall is visible in shadow on the left. It was amongst the ice pinnacles of the Khumbu Glacier, on the moraine in the lower centre of the picture, that we placed our Base Camp. This then was the stage set for our attempt of the weeks to come, when so much sweat and effort were to be expended in the struggle for the Summit. We were now at the foot of the problem. Thanks to the efforts of Band, Hillary, Lowe and Westmacott a route had been made up the icefall and the work of carrying stores up into the Western Cwm could begin.

Photo HUNT Leica f3.5 Elmar Ilford colour 1/60th second at f8



## THE ICEFALL

Once the difficult job of making a route up the icefall had been completed, we were faced with the problem of carrying up into the Western Cwm something like three tons of stores. In order to ferry up all this equipment we employed as porters 34 Sherpas, all of whom were properly equipped and clothed for climbing at high altitudes. From now until mid-May the work went on daily, often in very adverse conditions by about 11 o'clock each morning the inevitable afternoon snowfall had begun and continued for the rest of the day. In spite of this never a day was lost, and the hazardous work went on without respite. Each day parties of Sherpas carrying a load of stores, and always accompanied by a member of the climbing party, left Base Camp for Camp Three at the entrance to the Western Cwm. Their way was across a chaos of ice, threading through a labyrinth of tottering ice blocks, on ground that was never sure and almost always seemed to be hollow, so that the climber was moving over jammed blocks of ice above the abyss below, climbing steep walls where ropes had been fixed to help the passage of these difficult steps and passing innumerable crevasses which widened and changed daily as the ice ground its way down to the glacier below.

Photo HILLARY Retina II f3.5 Tessar Kodachrome 1/100th second at f8



## WORK IN THE ICEFALL

In the Everest icefall the crossing of enormous crevasses, which here are commonplace, is a major problem, for the journey up to the Western Cwm has to be made daily by laden porters for weeks on end. Some artificial means of bridging the crevasses is therefore necessary, and for this purpose we cut lower in the valley a number of small trees. In the top picture one of these trees is being dragged up a steep step in the icefall, to be fixed in position by lashing it to a metal spike which has been driven into the ice. Below, two tree trunks have been placed across a very deep crevasse, and two of the Sherpas are moving over with their loads on the seemingly endless journey to the Western Cwm. A journey made uncomplainingly by these men, often in bad weather with deep soft snow covering all previous tracks. Most of the crevasses were gradually widening, and a great deal of maintenance had to be carried out during these weeks to keep the route to Camp Three open. In the bottom right hand picture a Sherpa, carrying a box of oxygen by means of the usual head band, is climbing one of the difficult ice walls.

Photos	Top	WYLIE	Super Ikonta	f3.5 Tessar	Ektachrome	1/100th second
	at f8					
	Bottom Left	GREGORY		Retina II	f2 Xenon	Kodachrome
	1/100th second		at f5.6			
	Bottom Right	GREGORY		Retina II	f2 Xenon	Kodachrome
	1/100th second		at f8			



## CAMP TWO

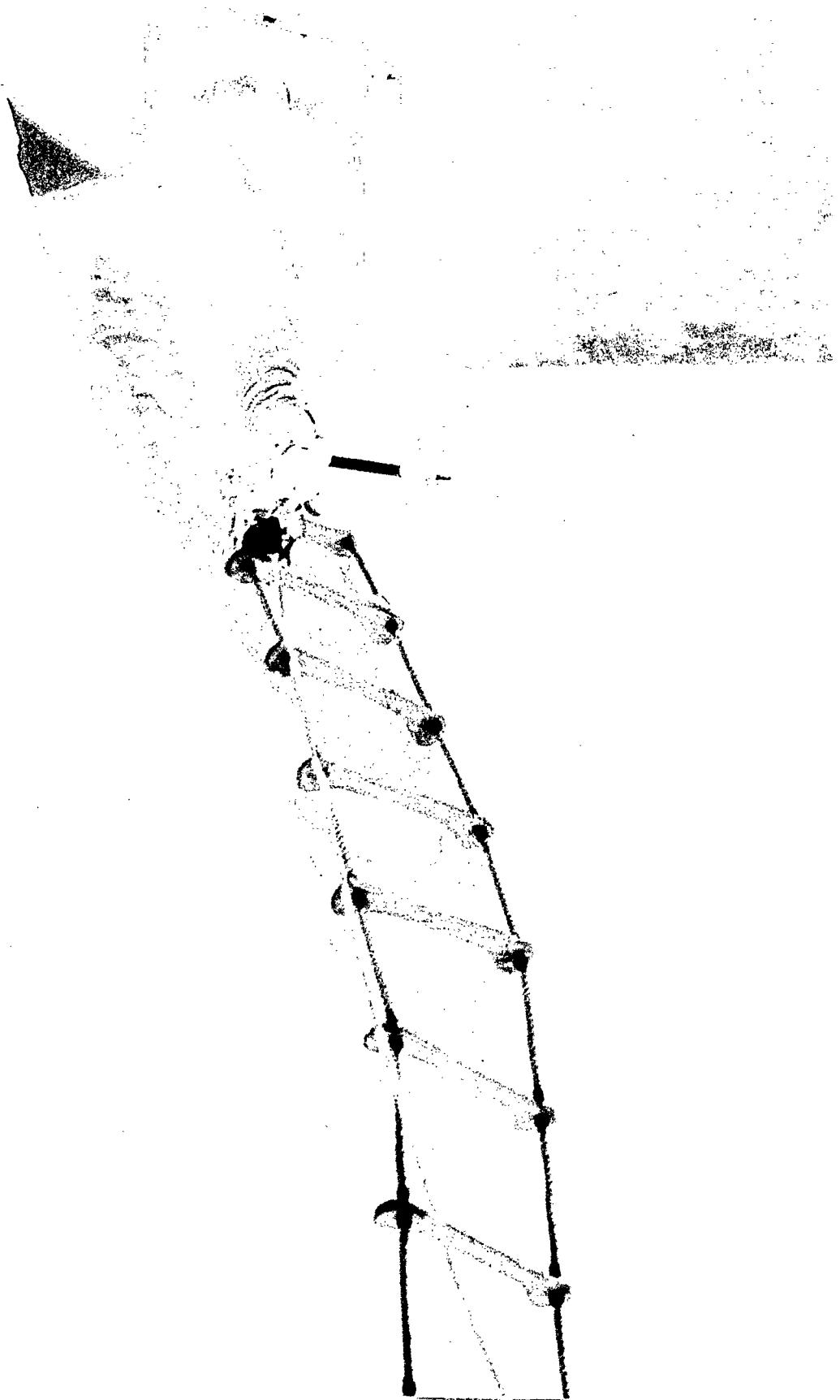
Camp Two was situated on a small plateau of ice halfway up the icefall. It was here that parties spent the night on the way up the mountain. The journey to Camp Three taking two days, the first day going up the lower part of the icefall to Camp Two, the next day moving up to Camp Three and descending to Base Camp. It was not a very pleasant site for, although reasonably safe from avalanche and falling séracs, it was on a moving glacier and crevasses were slowly appearing all round. It was terrifying to be awakened at night by a loud cracking noise as the glacier moved and shuddered its way relentlessly a little nearer the valley below. None of us was sorry when the Sherpas later decided that, rather than stay here, they would prefer to do the climb from Base Camp to Camp Three and down again in one day. Later, when we descended the icefall after the ascent had been made, the spot had completely changed. Where there had once been a level stretch for our camp, there were now deep crevasses and menacing blocks of ice. This photograph was taken on arrival at Camp Two with a party of Sherpas, who can be seen by the tents. On this day the glacier was covered with an unusually heavy fall of snow which had made hard going of the climb from Base Camp. Above, fortunately far enough away for our safety, gigantic blocks of ice hang from the end of the Nuptse ridge.

Photo LOWE Retina II f2.8 Xenon Kodachrome 1/100th second at f8



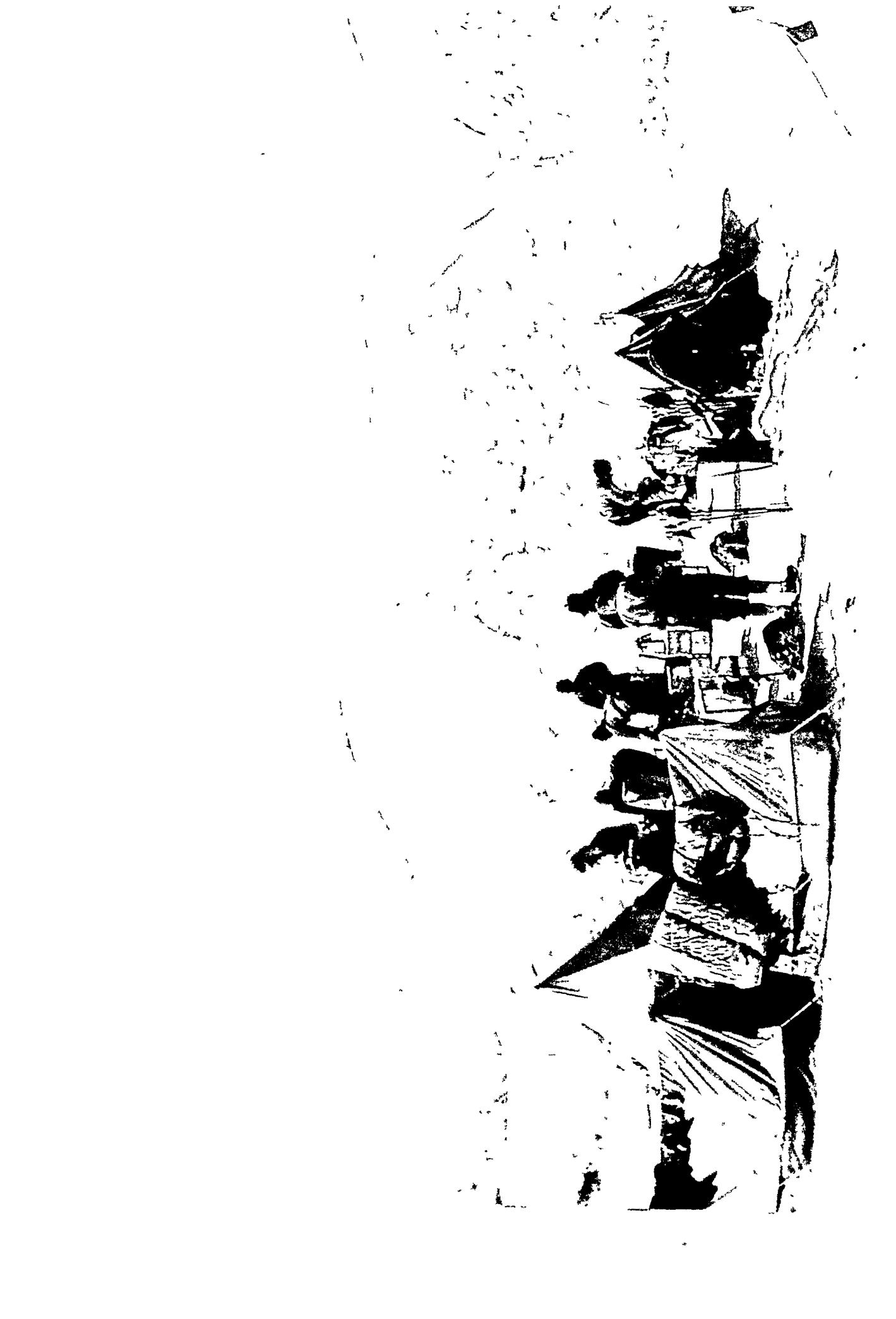
## A ROPE LADDER

Above Camp Two the icefall was less steep but, if anything, more dangerous, for here the ice scenery was on a grander scale and parties moving slowly and laboriously up to Camp Three were dwarfed by the enormous ice blocks that menaced this portion of the route. Each day the terrain had changed, new crevasses had opened up, and old ones had widened and lay as avalanche debris across our tracks. In spite of all these daily journeys, however, there was hardly ever a serious incident and it seems a miracle that during these weeks all our parties passed unscathed. The weary climber, having passed the various hazards below, where each difficulty had a name, such as "The Nutcracker", "The Atom Bomb Area", "Mike's Horror", "Hillary's Horror", etc., arrived at the top of the icefall to find himself faced with the last and steepest ice wall. To help the porters past this final difficulty there was a rope ladder, firmly anchored to the ice above.



### CAMP THREE

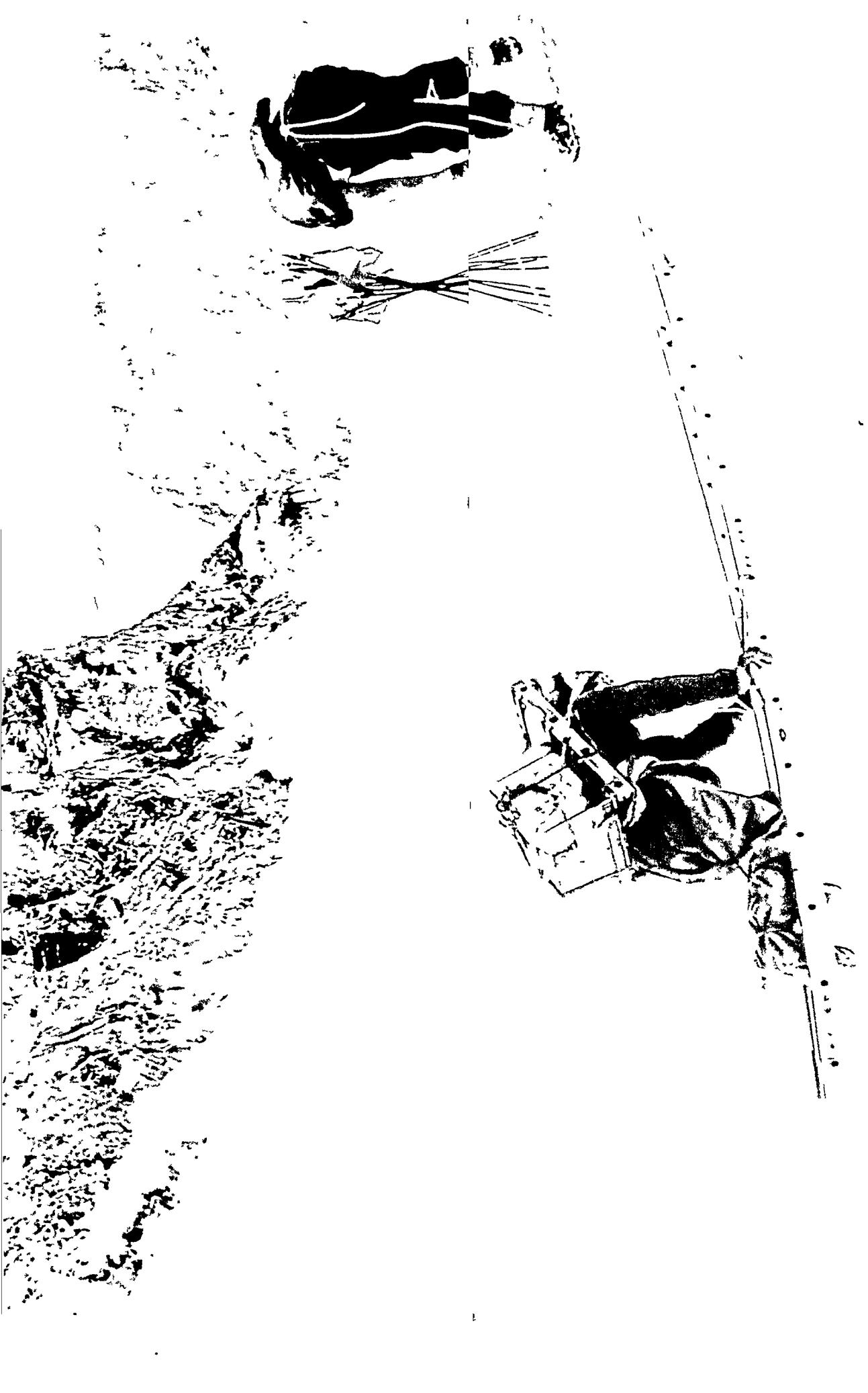
At the top of the icefall, on the first level lip of the glacier marking the entrance to the Western Cwm, stood Camp Three, a small outpost of life in the wilderness of ice. Here there was more space and a welcome respite from the weary ascent through the hazards of the ice cascade below. It was the end of the first stage in our effort on the mountain. Above the camp an enormous crevasse blocked further progress, but beyond this the glacier wound upwards between the staggering heights of the Nuptse Wall and the South-West Ridge of Everest until it disappeared from view amidst the complications of crevasse and ice step into the inner recesses of the Cwm. Below was the heaving, changing chaos of unstable ice through which stores were carried to be dumped at this spot, before being ferried on to Camp Four. In the photograph a party of Sherpas have just arrived from Camp Two and are putting down their loads, before drinking a welcome brew of tea and starting the descent to Base Camp. Ed Hillary is on the left near the pyramid tent, John Hunt is in braces and turning his back to the camera, whilst Noyce is bending down to enter a tent. Close to Noyce are the flags which we used to mark the route across the Western Cwm. Across two of the tents socks and eiderdown sleeping bags are airing in the sun.



## THE BIG CREVASSE

A short distance above Camp Three the biggest crevasse of all cuts right across the Western Cwm from one side to the other, presenting an important obstacle to the passage into the Cwm. We had known it was there, of course, even before going to the mountain, for Eric Shipton's Reconnaissance Expedition in 1951 had reached this point and the Swiss team in 1952 had experienced quite a lot of difficulty in crossing with their Sherpas and stores. We had therefore arrived prepared to bridge this gap effectively, and for this purpose had brought a light alloy sectional bridge which could be bolted together and placed across the narrowest part of the crevasse, as shown in the picture. Here a Sherpa is crawling across carrying a box of rations, whilst Noyce carefully takes in the rope. It was a sensational crossing and, as one crept over the slender ladder sliding crampons along the edge, one could look down and admire—if admire is the right word here—the ice fretwork and blue-green walls dropping away into an abyss hundreds of feet below. Higher in the photograph, where the Western Cwm narrows, the great ice wall of Nuptse runs up towards Lhotse at the head of the Cwm.

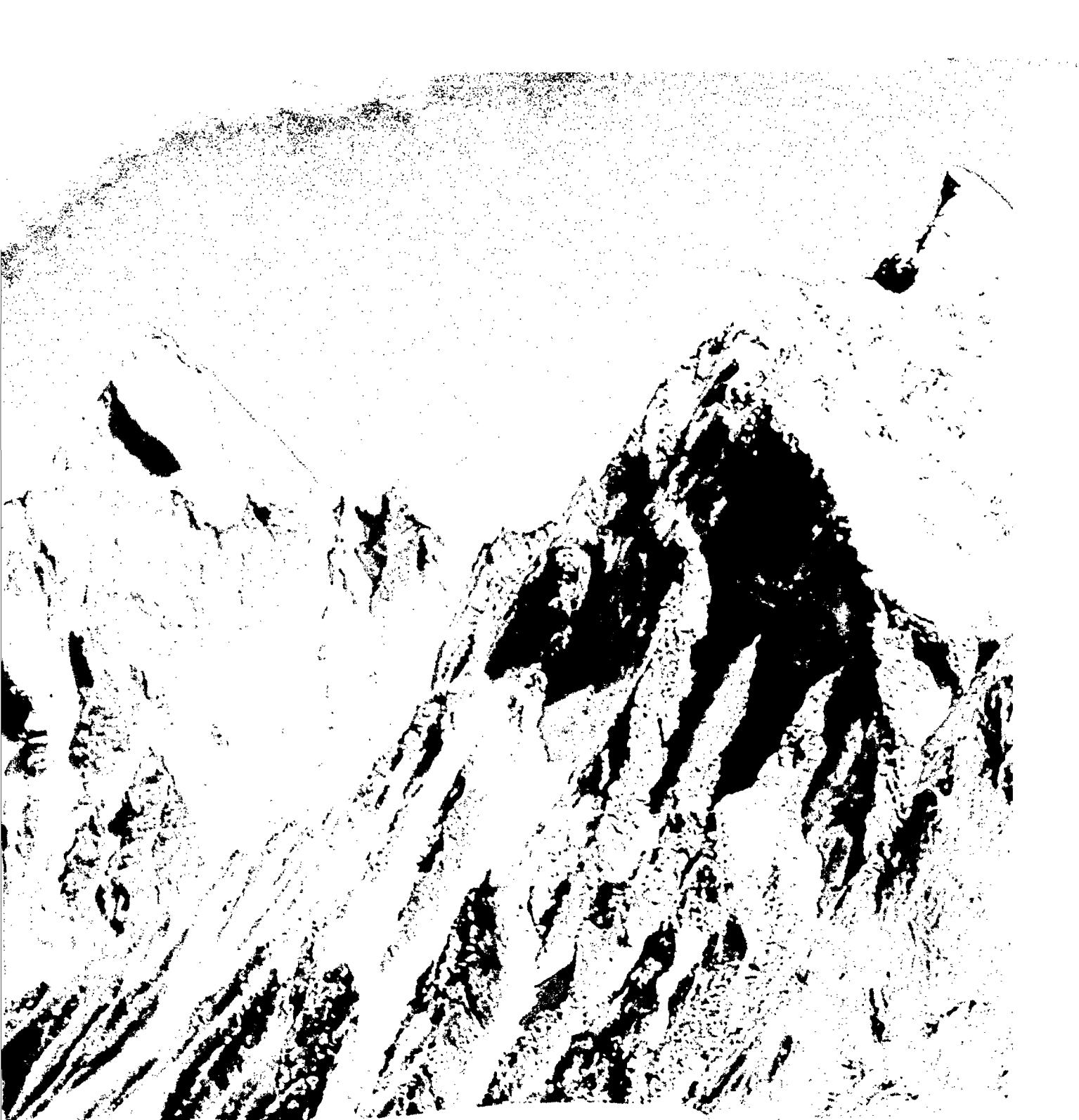
Photo GREGORY Retina II f2 Xenon Kodachrome 1/100th second at f7



## LINGTREN

The two peaks of Lingtren stand near the head of the Khumbu Glacier above our Base Camp. Rising straight from the glacier in an impregnable wall of rock, they shut in the upper part of the Khumbu Glacier and divide Nepal from Tibet with a frontier ridge of amazing grandeur. Seen from the Western Cwm above Camp Three they are an unforgettable sight, and during our prolonged stays there we had ample time to know and admire these wonderful peaks. Each day in the early morning as we started our trek by the winding glacier of the Cwm they stood behind us, two shadowy forms in the half-light, with the stars beyond them fading as the morning sun picked out the upward sweep of their corniced ridges, running up to form two symmetrical summits. In the evening the shadows lengthened and showed in relief the long buttresses of granite dropping away from view beyond the séracs of the icefall. Always they were there, with the graceful Pumori, dominating the view outwards from the Cwm, unless, as often in the afternoon, they hid themselves behind a grey pall of cloud and the wind blew past them and up the ice below in a swirling up-current of snow blizzard. Then, as we stood outside in the snow, our numbed fingers fighting our wireless set for the evening call-up, we certainly had no thoughts for the beauty of these mountains.

Photo GREGORY at f<sub>7</sub> Super Ikonta f<sub>3.5</sub> Tessar Ektachrome 1/100th second



## THE WESTERN CWM

Noyce and a party of Sherpas are resting on the way up the Western Cwm above Camp Three, with boxes of rations dumped by them on the snow. This is a ferry party based on Camp Three, carrying stores daily up to Camp Four. Everest with its South-West Ridge, Lhotse and the long ridge of Nuptse form here a cirque of high mountains that almost completely encloses the unique formation which is known as the Western Cwm. It is really a glacier, flowing down between these mountain walls for a distance of about four miles until, at a height of just over 20,000 feet where we had our Camp Three, it starts to fall over the rocky bed of the mountain and in a fearsome cascade of ice becomes what we know as the Everest icefall. The climber passing above Camp Three first crosses the big crevasse, and then weaves his way amongst the crevasses seen in the picture until he can step into the upper and narrower part of the valley. Standing beyond the first barrier of crevasses, he looks up the gentle whiteness of the glacier, snaking ahead in a river of snow-covered ice between the glistening ice-fluted walls of Everest and Nuptse, with here and there blocks of avalanche ice strewn across the floor of the Cwm. Then at the head of it all the ice sweeps upwards in a stupendous 4,000 foot wall to the South Col.

Photo GREGORY Retina II f2 Xenon Kodachrome 1/100th second at f8



## THE ROUTE TO CAMP FOUR

Moving by the side of an impressive crevasse in the Western Cwm, a party of Sherpas are carrying their loads up to Camp Four, near the head of the Cwm. They are following the crevasse until, under the wall of Nuptse beyond they can cross by a natural snow bridge and then follow the line of the Cwm again. By about May 15th, over three tons of stores had been carried across this glacier to our Advance Base Camp, three tons of food, oxygen and climbing equipment for our attempt on the Summit. It was weary work beating out a new trail each morning in the soft snow whilst the sun blazed down and the snow reflected its rays, making a heat that was stifling in the airless pockets of the glacier. The usual afternoon snowfall was almost a welcome respite, although it obliterated our tracks and meant more tiring work the following day when the next lift of stores was brought up from Camp Three. But in spite of the heat and the soft snow our Sherpas accepted the toil as normal routine and worked cheerfully and without complaint. For the climbing party, escorting the Sherpas was a daily job, seeing them safely across all the difficulties of the glacier, breaking the trail, and sometimes carrying a load to help out. There was, however, satisfaction in the work and, as the pile of equipment grew at Camp Four, we realised more and more that there was something about this expedition which inspired confidence, and that, under the determined leadership of John Hunt, a very fit party, wonderfully equipped, was at last getting to grips with its goal.

Photo

GREGORY Rolleiflex f3.5 Tessar Ektachrome 1/100th second at f8



## CAMP FOUR

Camp Four was established as our Advance Base Camp in a sheltered depression in the glacier about a mile from the foot of the Lhotse Face. This oasis of tents, nestling in one small corner of the vast desert of the Cwm, was our home during the days of preparation for the assault and the scene of continual comings and goings from the Face above and the camps below. It was a situation of great beauty. Behind our camp the mountain rose in a mass of shattered ice wall and hanging glacier to where the snow crest of the South-West Ridge ran upwards to butt against the main structure of Everest. To the west, fold after fold of whiteness stretched outwards, downward-dipping in a pure crystalline wilderness of snow until it disappeared over the edge of the icefall, beyond, the slender spire of Pumori and the long crenellated ridge of Nuptse bounded the Cwm to the South and closed this narrow valley until it broadened out beneath the icefall below. But it was above us that the mountain was most impressive. The rock bastion of Everest itself, massive in its strength, towered above our camp a wall of granite that rose in a sweep of rock slab and buttress to the South Summit of Everest. It was up there that our eyes were mostly turned, to the point where a snow plume always blew and the South-East Ridge dropped down to the South Col, inviolate above the 4,000 foot wall of the Lhotse Face.

Photo HILLARY Retina II f3.5 Tessar Kodachrome 1/100th second at f8



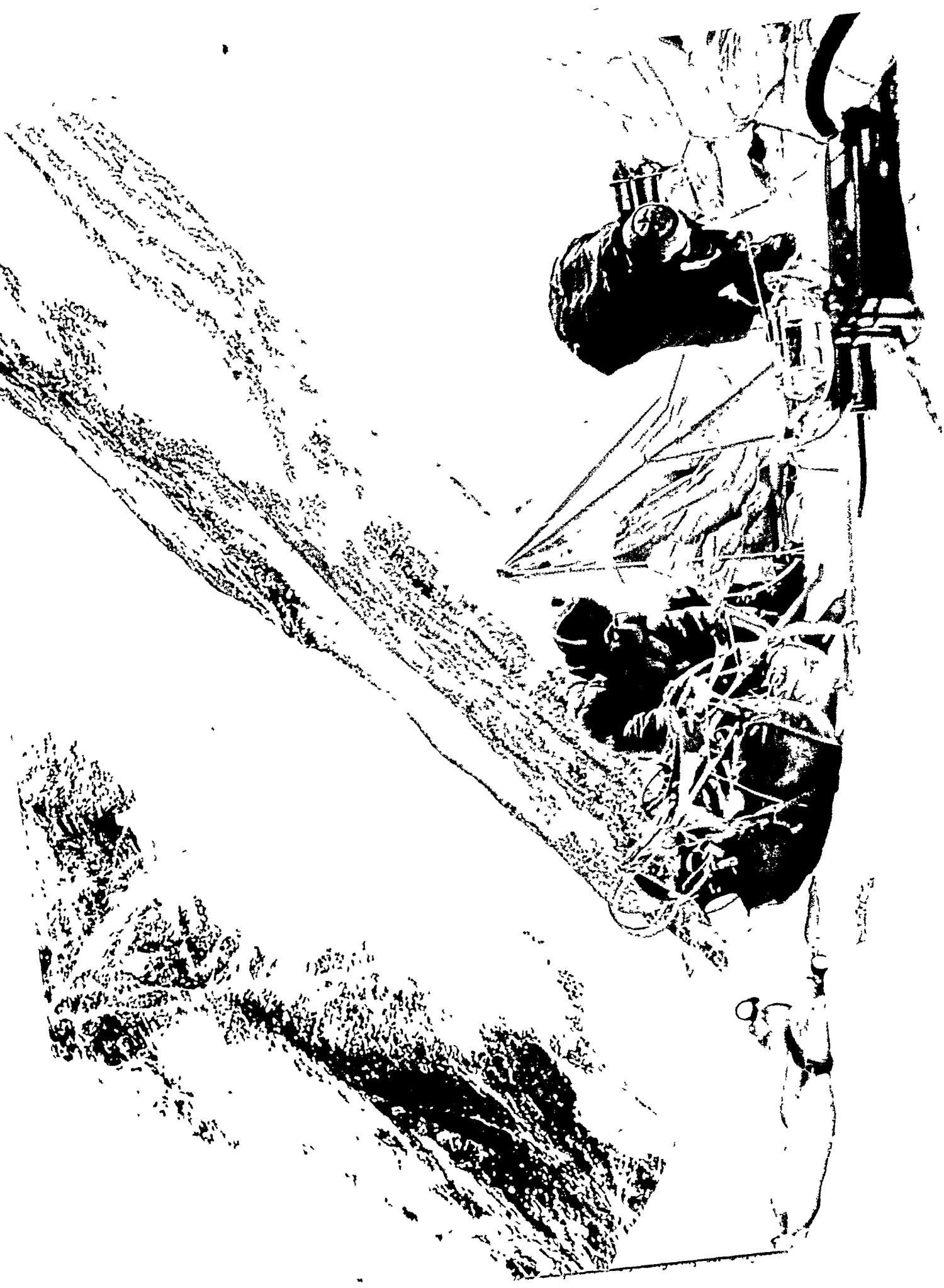
## THE LHOTSE FACE

Lhotse, 27,890 feet, stretches in a semi-circular mountain wall between Everest and Nuptse, completely closing the Western Cwm at the top. The steep glacier which descends from the summit rocks is known as the Lhotse Face and is one of the most important problems in the ascent of Everest from this side. In this picture it is clearly seen at the head of the Cwm. Our route followed the icefall in the centre until, high above the crevasses, a long upward traverse to the left could be made to the South Col, which is off the photograph. By mid-May the work on the Face above us had begun. George Lowe and Ang Nyima at Camp Six and Michael Westmacott at Camp Five had started what was to prove a terrible task. During the following epic days the struggle continued, with Wilfrid Noyce and Michael Ward sharing in the great work. George Lowe spent no less than ten days on the Face, working at a great altitude, a truly remarkable feat of endurance.



## CAMP SEVEN

Camp Seven was pitched in a remarkable position, behind an enormous block of ice, high on the Lhotse Face. The picture shows our Meade tents, two Sherpas who have just arrived from the Western Cwm, and assault oxygen bottles and stores for the South Col nearby on the snow. Behind the camp are the steep rocks of the "Eperon des Genevois". By May 18th a safe route had been made to Camp Seven and some way beyond, but there still remained the long traverse across the upper part of the Face to the South Col. This last portion of the route was completed by Wilfrid Noyce and the Sherpa Annulu on May 21st. During that day those of us who were at Camp Four were able to watch these men, two tiny figures lost in the immensity of the Face, slowly but surely making that eventful climb; and it was one of the great moments of the expedition to see them come over the top at 26,000 feet.



## SOUTH COL SHERPAS

The day following the fine work of Noyce and Annulu in reaching the South Col, it was a great thrill down at Camp Four to be able to watch a long line of Sherpas, led by Charles Wylie, moving out from Camp Seven across the Lhotse Face, carrying all the essential stores to the South Col. During that day the long caravan of Sherpas stretched across the steep ice, toiling upwards with a relentless surety, slowly, painfully, yet very steadily, until they reached the Col. All but one of this wonderful team of men carried up their loads. This man was too exhausted to finish, but Wylie himself took up his load and carried it to its destination. This carry of stores was one of the remarkable performances of the expedition, for the South Col lies at a height of 26,000 feet, which is almost the height of the highest mountain ever climbed before that day. On this expedition nineteen Sherpas carried something like seven hundred and fifty pounds of stores to the South Col, six of them going there twice. It was a feat unparalleled in the history of mountaineering.

This is the team of tough, cheerful, little men who reached the South Col and made this amazing carry. Two men are missing: Ang Nyima and Da Namgyal, who did such wonderful work with the assault support teams.

Front row (left to right) Noyce, Phu Dorji, Ang Dawa, Dawa Thondup, Ang Namgyal, Ang Temba, Gompu, Pasang Dawa, Topkie, Ang Dawa II, Ang Tsering, Wylie

Back row (left to right) Ang Dorji, Pemba, Pasang Phutar, Da Tenzing, Ang Tenzing (Balu), Ang Norbu, Gyalzen, Annulu

The following Sherpas went to the South Col twice: Pasang Dawa, Dawa Thondup, Ang Norbu, Pasang Phutar, Topkie, Annulu

Photo

GREGORY Retina II f<sub>2</sub> Xenon Kodachrome 1/100th second at f<sub>2</sub>



## THE FIRST ASSAULT PARTY

We were now at the beginning of those tremendous days towards the end of May when the assault was on. The weeks of work by all members of the team in the icefall and the Western Cwm, bringing up stores and safeguarding the route, had at last brought us within reach of our goal. Lowe's outstanding effort on the Lhotse Face, Noyce's arrival at the South Col and, perhaps more than anything, the superb carry of stores to the South Col by Wylie and his wonderful team of Sherpas, had opened the way to the Summit. But the most pleasing thing of all was the weather, for after weeks of atrocious conditions the afternoon snowfalls had ceased and the weather seemed set fair for our attempt. On May 21st the first assault pair, Tom Bourdillon and Charles Evans, supported by John Hunt, left Camp Four on their way up to the South Col. In the photograph Evans and Bourdillon are seen on the glacier of the Western Cwm, a short distance from Camp Four. Using the closed-circuit oxygen set they are starting out for the first attempt on the summit. The first man on the rope is Tom Bourdillon, wearing his blue wind-proof suit and rubber-soled high altitude climbing boots. He is carrying his rucksack, eiderdown, sleeping bag and crampons strapped to his oxygen set. Behind him Charles Evans is similarly dressed but in the shelter of the Cwm is not yet wearing his wind-proof anorak. John Hunt, who was to lead their support group, had already left with his Sherpas.



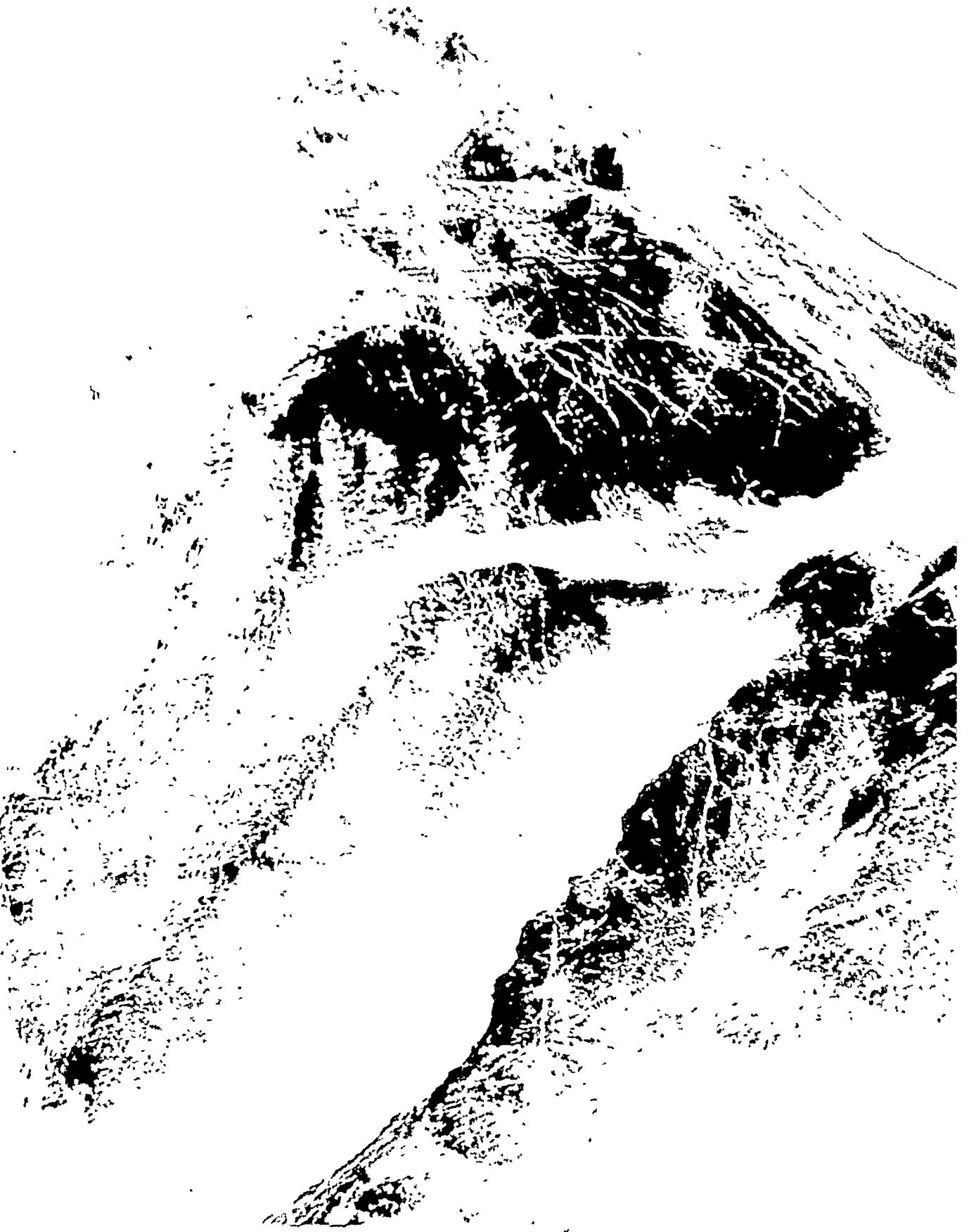
## THE SECOND ASSAULT PARTY

On May 25th the second assault party, Hillary and Tenzing, left Camp Four for the South Col. Hillary and Tenzing are here preparing to leave our Advance Base Camp and, with oxygen sets on, are dressed for their final epic climb. Ed Hillary, wearing his inimitable hat and check shirt, is turning on the oxygen for Tenzing, who stands ready to leave, already prepared for the top with flags wrapped around his ice axe. Their support group, myself and three Sherpas, Ang Nyima Pemba and Ang Temba, had already left, along with George Lowe and five more Sherpas carrying still more stores to the South Col. Among these were Dawa Thondup, 48-year old veteran of more Himalayan expeditions than anyone could remember, and Annulu, who had already done such good work in going to the Col with Noyce. Now, along with their other Sherpa companions, they were going back to the South Col a second time. We were in good company.



## THE SOUTH SUMMIT OF EVEREST

From the upper part of the Lhotse Face, where this photograph was taken, there is a superb view of the South Summit of Everest. Seen for the first time at this height it looks tremendously impressive, standing a full 3,000 feet above the South Col, with a cloud of snow blowing from its South-East Ridge, a cold, slender, white spire pointing into the sky, high above the world, and hiding behind it a higher point still, the Summit of Everest itself. The rock ridge in the bottom of the picture running up to the South Col is the "Eperon des Genevois", so christened by the Swiss, who climbed it in 1952. Above the South Col, the white skyline crest is the South-East Ridge, the way by which we were to go to the top. On the morning of May 26th the second assault party and its support group were on their way up to the South Col. It was a beautiful morning, fine and calm in the shelter of the Lhotse Face, but high above us little white wisps of snow were being blown from the high crest in the wind, telling of the gale still blowing up there. This was one of the great days, a day of high hopes, for somewhere above us John Hunt, Tom Bourdillon and Charles Evans were on their way up to the South East Ridge. The first assault had begun. It was at the top of this face above the rocks of the "Eperon", which we reached about midday, that we witnessed one of the most exciting moments of the Expedition. Suddenly, as we started on the last stretch of rocks to the Col, there was a loud shout from George Lowe, and a wonderful sense of excitement ran through the party as the Sherpas took up the cheer. Then, as we turned our gaze towards Everest, against the white snow of the mountain we could see two tiny dots, Evans and Bourdillon, going over the South Summit of Everest. They were then at 28,700 feet, a long way higher than anyone had ever been before. It was a wonderful and moving moment.



## THE SOUTH COL

Camp Eight was on the dreary waste that is the South Col. Arriving by the Lhotse Face over the top of the "Eperon des Genevois", one must descend to reach it, and at the end of a stay there is a 200 foot uphill climb to get out, which is very exhausting for a tired party, and which adds to one's feeling of claustrophobia and isolation. The South Col, lying at an altitude of nearly 26,000 feet, must be one of the most unpleasant spots in the world. Here the altitude, the wind and the cold combine to make a vital, vicious force, a force that seems almost tangible in its reality, pressing down on the climber and making life unbearable. Hard, frozen snow, glistening blue ice and stones form this plateau, swept almost continually by an Everest gale. On very few days of the year is it still, yet it was such a day that we had somehow to snatch for the attempt on the Summit. On the Col, frozen into the ground, were the tattered remains of the Swiss camp from the year before, and nearby, the tents of our camp erected by Hunt, Bourdillon and Evans. Soon after the arrival of the second assault party, Hunt came back from the ridge above, where he had been in support of Evans and Bourdillon. He had given all he had this day, and after struggling down without oxygen was terribly tired. Having only one Sherpa, Da Namgyal, since one of his two Sherpas was sick, he himself had had to carry a very heavy load to a great altitude, and had established a dump of stores at 27,350 feet. This was the beginning of the material for the last camp. It was a wonderful effort. John Hunt, who had so brilliantly led this team through all the weeks of preparation, had now brought us very near to the Summit, and in doing so had himself played a vital role in the assault.



## THE FIRST ASCENT OF THE SOUTH SUMMIT

On May 26th Tom Bourdillon and Charles Evans reached the South Summit of Everest at 28,700 feet, and looked for the first time ever at the final ridge which leads to the top. In the opposite picture Charles Evans is standing on the South Summit, wearing the closed-circuit oxygen set and gazing across to the summit ridge. It must have been a bitter disappointment to these two men to come so far and then have to turn back, but they had no time to go further. Theirs was one of the outstanding feats of the expedition. It was no failure to reach the Summit—it was the first ascent of the South Summit of Everest. It was what we had always hoped they would do, that they would at least go as far as the South Summit and look at the last stretch of the ridge. In reaching this point they climbed 3,000 feet from the South Col in the day, which was an astonishing performance at that altitude.



## RETURN TO THE COL

During the afternoon of May 26th, once we had settled in at the South Col, we began to watch the ridge above us, looking for signs of Bourdillon and Evans coming down, but the weather had thickened and the South Summit was obscured by cloud. Nevertheless, we watched as the afternoon wore on, and suddenly we saw them in a break in the mist. As the cloud shifted and swirled about the ridge we had occasional glimpses of them coming very slowly down the snow crest. At last, as the wind gathered in violence, and in a rising gale, they appeared below the cloud at the bottom of a snow gully. We watched these two black dots, like flies on the vast expanse of ice that covers the Col, as slowly, wearily, leaning into the wind, they crept in towards our camp. We went out to meet them, to help them in, and to hear their story. But perhaps the opposite picture can say, better than words of mine, something of that day, never have I seen men more tired, they had given all their strength to reach the South Summit, and only just had enough to get back. It is a pity that this remarkable climb was overshadowed to some extent by the events of May 29th, but in the excitement of the mountain being climbed it should not be forgotten that for two whole days they were the highest men on earth.



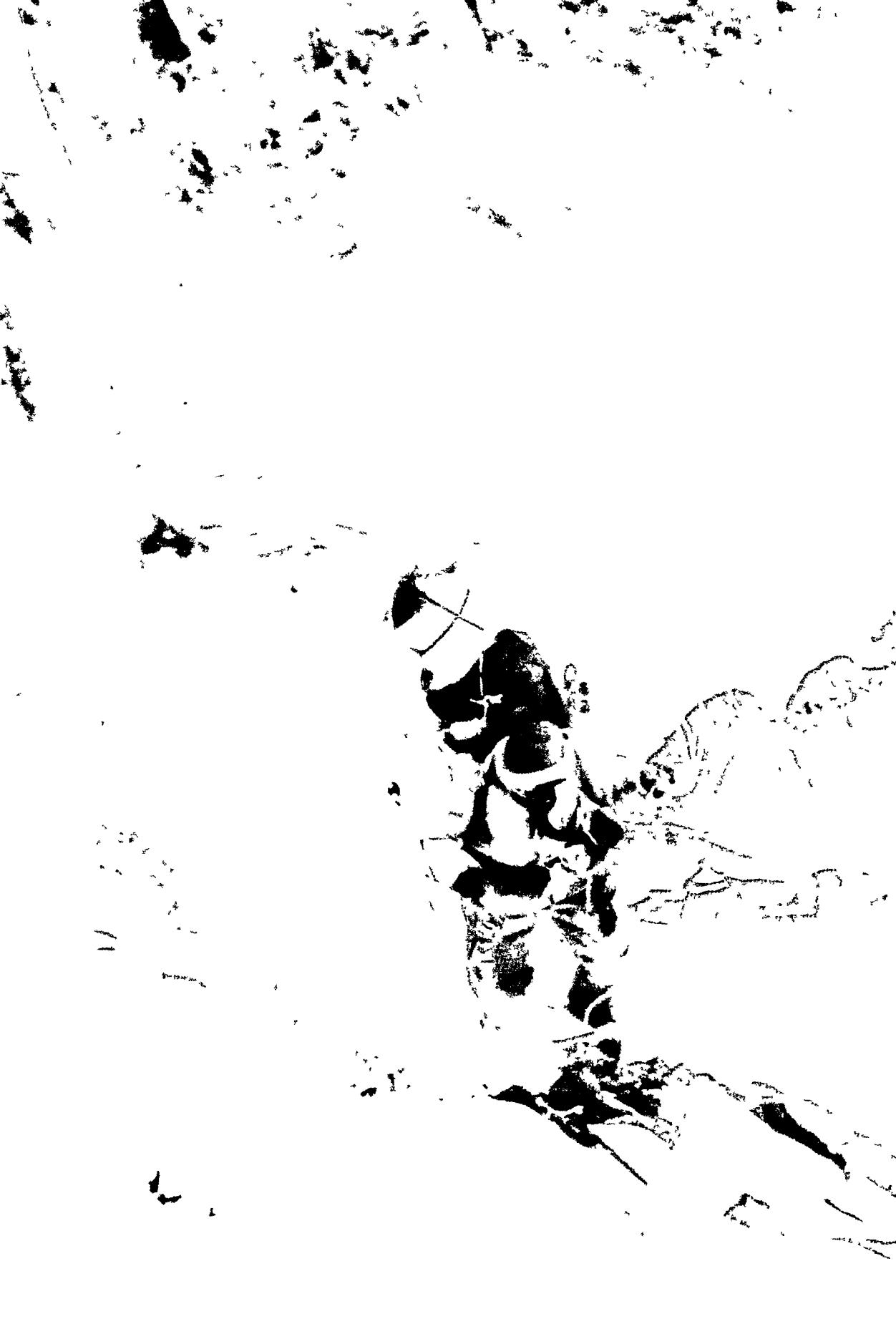
## STEP CUTTING AT 27,000 FEET

In the steep gully above the South Col, Lowe and I cut steps up the hard, frozen snow which leads to the South-East Ridge, preparing a route for Hillary and Tenzing. With us went Ang Nyima, the only Sherpa fit enough to go high that day, which meant that we were all carrying loads of over 40 lbs. After a day of storm, which we had sat out at the Col, the weather had now become fine and clear and the gale was dying, although occasional gusts of wind struck the ridge above us, blowing little flurries of snow into our faces as we climbed. By mid-day we reached the main ridge where Hillary and Tenzing eventually joined us, and together we sat in our high belvedere looking out to Makalu and the mountains and plains of Tibet. Nearby were the remains of the tent left behind by Raymond Lambert and Tenzing the year before. It was a strange and moving sight to see it there, with just a tent pole and the battered remnants of yellow canvas half buried in the snow, a silent witness to what had been a very gallant attempt on the Summit.



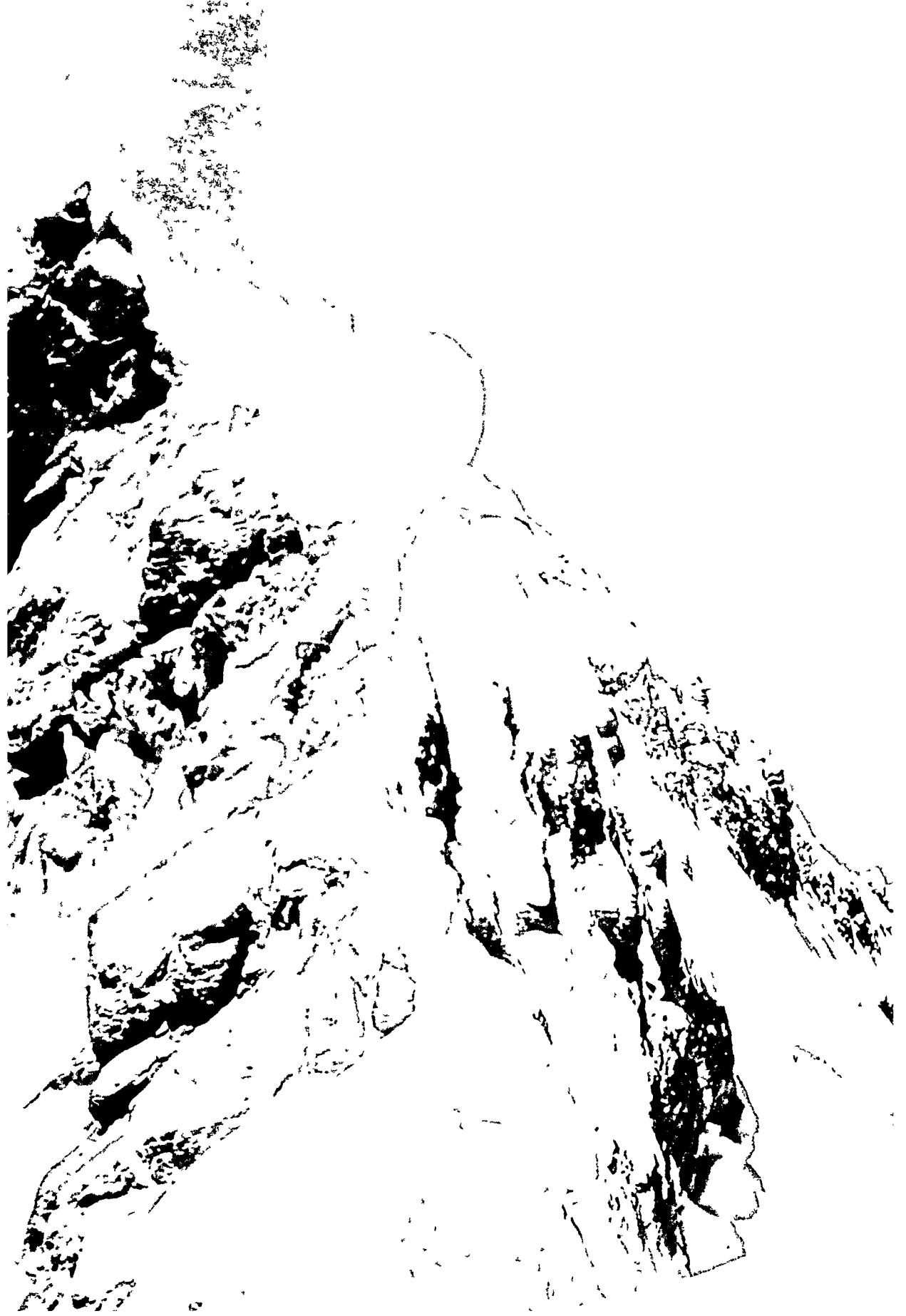
## HILLARY AND TENZING AT NEARLY 28,000 FEET

Hillary and Tenzing are climbing the South-East Ridge at almost 28,000 feet, just below the site of Camp Nine. As the day sped on its way the assault party and their support climbed wearily up this ridge, stopping for a while to take on more supplies at John Hunt's impressive dump of stores, intending somehow to get all this gear yet higher on the mountain. There was a certain amount of friendly discussion here as we eyed with dismay the awkward bulk and shape of oxygen bottles and tent, but somehow it was sorted out, and we staggered on our way with loads of 55 to 60 lbs. For a long time the ridge ran remorselessly upwards without hope of a platform for a tent, and it seemed a long way back to the Col. But eventually we did find a place, a slightly outward-sloping ledge, at a height of 27,900 feet, and there at 3 o'clock in the afternoon George Lowe, Ang Nyima and I turned to go down, leaving Ed Hillary and Tenzing to their lonely vigil of the night of May 28th.



## THE SUMMIT RIDGE

From the South Summit a white wave of snow leads to the Summit of Everest. It was along this virgin ridge that Hillary and Tenzing climbed to reach the top on the morning of May 29th. It is a sensational ridge, much harder than we had ever imagined, and it says much for the skill and stamina of these two men that they climbed it with such a margin of time to spare. It was in the very best tradition of mountaineering. The photograph was taken by Hillary on their descent to the South Summit after their triumphant climb, and shows their tracks, the steps chipped by Hillary in the hard firm snow, leading upwards from beyond the snow dome of the South Summit. Moving one at a time they followed the summit ridge, step-cutting all the way and keeping as close as possible to the rocks, to avoid the enormous snow cornices which hang over the Kangshung Face of Everest, dropping away into Tibet thousands of feet below. Higher, the dark rocks near the top of the ridge form the steep rock step which is the main difficulty. Here they had to jam and crampon their way up a kind of chimney between the rock and the ice, until they gained the crest above.



## NEAR TO THE TOP

In the foreground the steps cut in the snow near the rocks are the tracks of Hillary and Tenzing above the difficult rock step, which drops away to the gap before the South Summit, seen as a definite point at the end of the ridge in the middle distance. Beyond, the slopes of the South-East Ridge descend past Camp Nine to the South Col. On the left is the rocky summit of Lhotse, and in the distance, in the cloud, the peaks of Khumbu. To Hillary and Tenzing, cutting along this narrow edge of snow, the ridge must have seemed unending, for it stretched away in front with the summit hidden from view behind curl after curl of snow cornice, and as they cut round each hump of ice there was always another ahead and yet another after that, with the ridge running unrelentingly on. By this time they must have been tiring, but they were going well and above all safely, grimly determined now to reach the top, come what might. Suddenly the ridge seemed to be dropping away, and in front of them was one last dome of glistening snow, with blue sky behind it, and then—to quote Hillary 'a few more whacks of the ice axe in the firm snow and we stood on top'



## THE SUMMIT

At 11.30 on the morning of May 29th, 1953 Hillary and Tenzing set foot on the Summit of Everest. It must have been an unforgettable moment and we can only imagine how they felt standing on that small dome of snow, with all the high peaks of the Himalayas stretched out below them, the highest men on earth. It was the fulfilment of the hopes and dreams of two generations of mountaineers, the culmination of over thirty years of effort on the mountain. It was for this that we, and those who had gone up before us, had crossed the world and struggled with this great peak, so that now we might be permitted to place two of our number for a brief fifteen minutes on the summit of the earth. At last the mountain was climbed and Hillary and Tenzing were there on the top, shaking hands and thumping each other on the back until they were breathless. Tenzing, in this now famous picture with his ice-axe aloft and his flags unfurled, was photographed by Hillary. Then Tenzing made an offering of biscuits and chocolate in the snow to his gods, whilst Hillary placed a small crucifix, given to him by Hunt, by its side before they started to make their way down.



## THE VIEW FROM THE SUMMIT

From the top of Everest Hillary took photographs down all the ridges which lead to the Summit. The most interesting of these is the view down the North Ridge, the scene of all previous attempts on the mountain before the war. Looking down this ridge for the first time and seeing the summit rocks falling steeply to the North Col, Hillary thought that the last portion of the famous ridge looked very difficult indeed. The North Col is the rocky depression to the right of the picture beyond the snow field in the foreground. From here a sharp rock ridge runs up to the summit of Changtse or North Peak. The East Rongbuk Glacier, which was the route of approach for the expeditions from this side, sweeps round from the right down to the valley and the Rongbuk Monastery.





# SOME NOTES ON HIGH ALTITUDE PHOTOGRAPHY

Although reaching the summit of Everest was the main concern of all members of the Expedition, the necessity for obtaining a full photographic cover of the ascent was obvious. Quite apart from the desire to bring back photographs which would be a pictorial record, as these of course have their place in history after a successful enterprise such as this, climbing on Everest was news, and pictures were wanted as quickly as possible for publication all over the world.

## General Considerations

When asked to co-ordinate the photographic arrangements of the Expedition I found that there were certain clearly defined requirements. First of all there was the need for press photographs which would have public appeal and interest and be good action shots of actual climbing. This means when climbing at high altitude on a mountain like Everest that the necessity for taking photographs of everything and at all times must become almost an obsession and be continually foremost in the mind.

Always on the Expedition a lot of attention was given to colour photography, as naturally we wished to have a proper colour record of the ascent for ultimate use in public lectures, exhibitions, and books. In order to ensure an adequate cover members of the team were asked to concentrate on colour or black-and-white as the case might be, so that as far as possible there would always be somebody taking photographs in both these mediums at all points on the mountain.

## Climatic Conditions and Equipment

Because of the great height of Everest, the extreme cold that would be experienced imposed special problems. The question of the effects of cold on equipment was gone into very carefully, but it was complicated by the fact that the approach to Everest would be through tropical valleys, and cameras and film therefore would be subject to extremes of heat and cold. Even on Everest itself, at heights up to about 23,000 feet the day temperatures in the Icefall and the Western Cwm are very high, although the night temperatures are very low indeed.

Finally it was decided not to treat specially our normal cameras, but as a precaution we did in fact take a number of cameras that had been degreased or specially greased to withstand arctic conditions. It is, however, interesting to note that the cameras which finally did the most work were those that had not been treated in any way. This was mainly because climbers were loth to change from cameras they were used to handling, and even the assault teams and climbers who went high used their own cameras which were normal standard models. No camera which had been specially greased or degreased went higher than 23,000 feet.

Although it was to be expected that we would have trouble with camera shutters seizing up in very cold conditions, in actual fact very little inconvenience was experienced, mainly due to the care taken to protect cameras and keep them warm. During the night, when forty degrees of frost and more were normal, cameras were kept in sleeping bags.

High on the mountain where cold and wind were extreme climbers carried their cameras round their necks but inside their down jackets

On the whole there was no difficulty with film. In the past it has been my experience that film has a tendency to break at very low temperatures but this is usually when it is wound on in the camera in the early morning before sunrise. We had no difficulty with condensation on film but condensation on lenses was frequent when cameras were taken from the cold into warm tents.

In the lower valleys and villages there is a great deal of dust and it is advisable to keep cameras and lenses in a dust proof bag when not in use.

### Exposures

Probably the only successful way of checking exposures at high altitude on snow is by using an exposure meter with an incident light attachment. The light is far too strong at Himalayan altitudes to permit an ordinary reflected light reading to be taken as the needle goes completely off the scale. A normal exposure on a glacier for colour film having a speed of Weston 8 would be 1/100th second at f8 although higher on the mountain this was cut to 1/100th second at f11. For black and white pictures using film with a speed of Weston 24 the exposure would be something like 1/100th second at f16 to f22.

From the results of the two Himalayan expeditions of 1952 and 1953 it would seem that at high altitude there is great danger of over exposure especially with colour. It is still very easy however to under expose where there is much shadow detail and in the photography of people and action studies.

### Filters

For photographs in the valleys a light yellow green filter is the most useful for black and white pictures otherwise the heavy foliage of the foreground forests is rendered too dark. At high altitude a U V filter is all that is necessary for black and white photographs as even a pale yellow filter will render skies almost black. For colour a normal ultra violet filter was used at all altitudes.

### Film Material on the Summit

Although the advisability of using black and white film for important high altitude shots and possible summit pictures because of its greater exposure latitude was always in my mind we finally decided to use colour. All pictures taken higher than the South Col (25,850 feet) and of course on the summit were taken on colour film. Exposures were correct and the results excellent. Since then first class black and white enlargements have been made from these colour transparencies.

### Despatch of Film and Processing

Exposed film was sent back regularly by mail runner to Kathmandu whence it was sent back to England by air. Black and white film was processed by *The Timer* whilst colour film was processed by the manufacturers.



SUMMIT

27

CAMP IX 21900

0

Printed by CHARTER FULL PRESS

CAMP VIII 26000

2000

LEGEND

ASSAULT

STORES PORTERS IN SUPPORT OF C  
STORES FERRY

CAMP V 22000

WESTERN

CWM

CAMP IV 21200

21000

CAMP III 20200

TO ALT

CAMP II 19400

19000

BASE  
REFUGEE

BASE CAMP 17900

CAMP I  
ESTABLISHED

WESTERN

CAMP IV  
ESTABLISHED

CWM

HIGH LEVEL

11,000

12,000

13,000

14,000

15,000

16,000

17,000

18,000

19,000

20,000

21,000

22,000

23,000

24,000

25,000

26,000

27,000

28,000

29,000

30,000

APRIL

MA

# SOUTH PEAK

## SOUTH COL

CAMP VIII  
EST'D

## LHOTSE FACE

CAMP VI  
ESTABLISHED

CAMP VII  
ESTABLISHED

ADVANCE BASE  
ESTABL.

SECOND PHASE OF BUILD-UP

TENZING, GREGORY, NOYCE,  
WYLIE, WARD and OTHERS  
WITH TWO SHERPA TEAMS

WESTMACOTT KELPS THE ICE

7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26

SUMMIT 29,002

CAMP IX 21,900

CAMP VIII 26,000

CAMP VII

CAMP VI 22,000

CAMP IV 21,200

CAMP III 20,200

CAMP II 19,400

BASE CAMP 17,900

25,000

20,000

15,000

10,000

5,000

0

# CHART OF THE ASCENT OF EVE

0

(Prepared by CHARTBELL PRESS)

## LEGEND

Assault Parties

Climbing Parties

Stores Parties in support of Cl. Parties

Stores Ferry

WESTERN  
CWM

CAMP IV  
ESTABLISHED

10,000 FEET  
GREGORY NOGAI  
+ SHERPAS

10,000 FEET  
BOURDONN WYLSE  
+ 7 SHERPAS

10,000 FEET  
P. SHERPAS  
BANDI TENZING  
+ 7 SHERPAS  
EACH TEAM 5 TRIPS

ICEFALL

CAMP II  
ESTABLISHED

CAMP III  
ESTABLISHED

10,000 FEET  
GREGORY NOGAI  
+ SHERPAS

10,000 FEET  
BOURDONN WYLSE  
+ 7 SHERPAS

10,000 FEET  
P. SHERPAS  
BANDI TENZING  
+ 7 SHERPAS  
EACH TEAM 5 TRIPS

11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30  
APRIL MA

SOUTH PEAK

SOUTH COL

CAMP VIII  
EST'D

OTSE  
FACE

CAMP VI  
ESTABLISHED

CAMP VII  
ESTABLISHED

SECOND PHASE OF BUILD-UP

ADVANCE BASE  
ESTABLIS.

TENZING, GREGORY, NOYLE,  
WYLIE, WARD and OTHERS  
WITH TWO SHERPA TEAMS

WESTMACOTT KEEPS

7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26